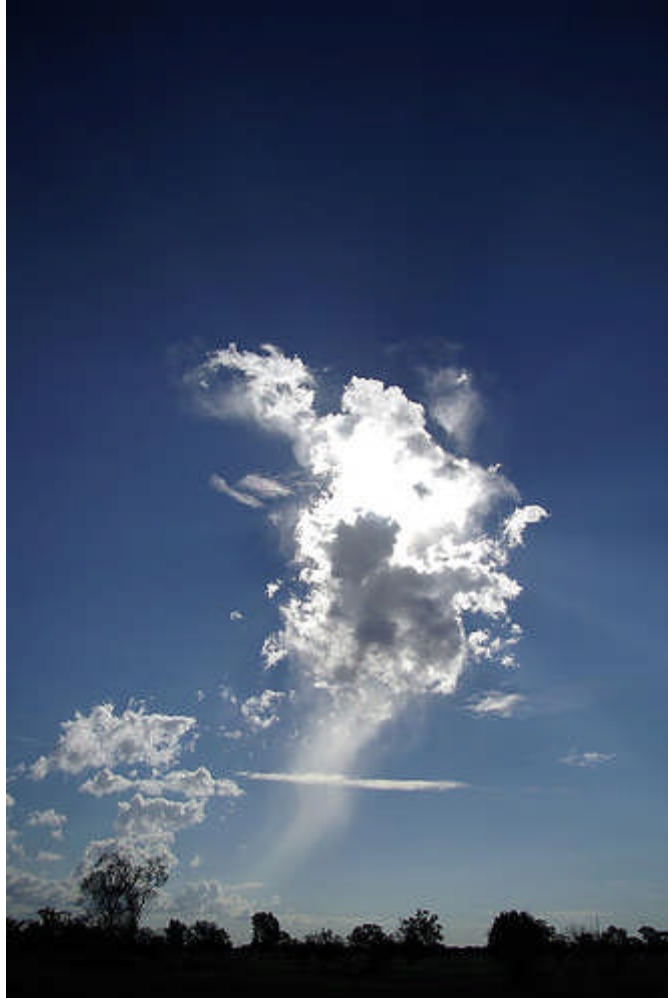


SIMPLE STUDIES IN SCRIPTURE
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE
STUDENT'S STUDY GUIDE



“they are without water, carried about of winds...”
Jude 12

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

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The General Epistle of Jude

Human Author: Jude
Divine Author: Holy Spirit
Date: c. AD 67
Key concept: Guard the faith
Key verse: Jude 3

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Introduction

Jude, whose name means, "*praise*" or "*celebration*", wrote what is considered to be a general epistle. Unlike other letters addressed to a single person such as Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, or to a particular Church such as the one in Corinth, Jude wrote to the Church of Christ at large. He writes to all who are "*set apart*" in Christ Jesus. A twofold objective is given for writing this epistle.

First, Jude wrote to warn the saints about false teachers and their false doctrines (1:4). The Church has always had to deal with individuals who want to introduce new concepts that are contrary to the truth given by Christ.

Second, Jude wrote to inspire love for God in the sphere of truth (1:20-21). The truth can be recognized in part as it magnifies the person and work of Jesus Christ and as it promotes holiness. Titus 1:1 speaks "*of the truth which is after godliness.*"

Jude 1

1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

1:1 The name Jude was quite common. It was given to the best of men (Gen. 29:35) as well as to the worst of men such as Iscariot. In verse 1 Jude identifies himself as the author of the letter. He declares himself to be "*the servant of Jesus Christ.*"

For Jude the title of servant was an honorable one. We are reminded that it takes great dignity to serve others and serve them well with humility. Christ Himself is our example for the Son of Man came to minister and to give His life a ransom.

The humility of Jude is immediately manifested if he is in fact the same person mentioned in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 as the half brother of Jesus Christ. What a temptation it would be to boast of being the literal half brother of the Messiah. But Jude does not boast. He does not lay claim to any physical relationship with Christ. He is the Lord's servant. Of course, Jude became the Lord's servant rather late. Jude, along with the rest of the siblings, did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah until after the Lord's resurrection from the dead. None of the brothers of Jesus are listed among the original disciples (John 7:5; Mark 6:4) and that is unfortunate.

But the good news is that the risen Lord did appear to His brother James (1 Cor. 15:7). Afterwards we find all the brothers of Jesus among the believers (Acts 1:14). It may very well be that Jude came to faith because of the testimony of James. James himself became a prominent leader in the early Church and wrote the epistle that bears his name.

In as far as Jude is the half brother of Jesus it is a wonderful story of redemption, humility, and grace for Jude was given the privilege of writing part of the *Word of God* that will live and abide forever. The Bible is very careful to make a dramatic distinction between him and Judas Iscariot (John 14:22). And what a difference there was. Whereas one was faithful, the other was faithless. While one confessed Christ, the other betrayed Him. One brought honor to the Lord's name while the other was a living contradiction of corruption clothed in goodness.

The righteousness of the apostolic Jude is reflected in John 14:22. One day Jude asked Jesus a question. Lord, how is it that thou will manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world? The question reflects in part the wonder that all of God's people sense. To be the recipients of amazing grace is a most humbling experience.

1:1 Called. By referring to those who are "*called*", Jude exercises a measure of Christian maturity for the doctrine of election is not easy to be understood or accepted as per John 6:66. Nevertheless, God has a called out people. They have been called to salvation and then to sanctification. God's people are called out of the world.

They are to be in the world but not of it. There are certain practices the world finds amusing and entertaining which the Christian community cannot.

Historically the Church has taken a strong stand against specific sins such as homosexuality, abortion, greed, and gambling. The Church has opposed these practices because they are self-destructive and other destructive. The Church withstands sin because it no longer thinks in terms of personal pleasure but more in terms of what is pleasing to God. The people of the Lord have been called from sin to holiness, and holiness is determined by conscience guided by the *Bible*.

1:1 Sanctified. Those who are "*called*" are declared in the Authorized Version to be sanctified in Christ by God the Father (1:1). This means that God the Father is the active agent in bringing His children to a state of holiness. It is a wonderful truth to realize that not only does God really exist, not only is He active in the affairs of man, but He is very much concerned about the holiness of those whom He saves. A person who can sin in the Church with impunity is in a fearful state for the Lord will correct those whom are His own (Heb. 12:8-13). Those who are called are certain to be sanctified.

In teaching about sanctification, *Bible* teachers like to present this work in the past tense, the present tense, and the future tense. Christians have been sanctified. Christians are being sanctified. Believers shall be sanctified. Another way of speaking of this is by referring to positional sanctification, progressive sanctification, and ultimate sanctification.

Whatever the terminology, the concept is the same. God's people love goodness and hate evil. There is a longing to be different. There is a desire to be better, and to cease from sin. Any real sanctification is possible only because individuals have been made partakers of a divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). There is absolutely no confidence that a person can die in a state of sin and go to heaven (3 John 1:11). The *Bible* says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

1:1 Preserved. Those who are called and sanctified are also preserved in Jesus Christ. First, the elect of God are preserved from a final fall into sin and apostasy. Except the Lord preserve His own all would be like the disciples, fleeing in the face of spiritual opposition (Phil. 1:6).

Second, the elect of God are preserved from utter condemnation. There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). The Protestant Reformers made much of this point stressing the faithfulness of God to keep that which He has set His holy and omnipotent hands on.

Third, the elect of God are preserved for heaven (2 Pet. 3:13). Having spoken of divine election, Jude begins to express the desire of his heart (1:2). He longs for mercy to be made manifest to the saints.

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

1:2. Mercy refers to unmerited favor, able to be bestowed upon others and willing to be given. When Jude prays, he says in effect, "*Lord, grant mercy to your people.*" Mercy is the fountain of all the good we shall ever have. There is not an angel in heaven, there is not a man on earth, there is not a beast in the field that can lay claim to the blessings of life. Whatever we have, whatever we are is found in God's mercy.

1:2 Peace and love. In addition to mercy, Jude also longs that peace and love should be multiplied. The *Bible* speaks of having peace with God (Rom. 5:1). This peace is based upon the principle of reconciliation.

There is also the peace from God. This peace is soul tranquility in the midst of life's pressures (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2). Such divine peace is needed. All around the world there is unrest. Nations are at war. There is death and sudden destruction. And yet, in the midst of chaos and carnage individuals can have peace (Phil. 4:9). Not because they are removed from the conflicts of life but because of Christ and the love of God which is shed abroad in the heart.

People who know that they are loved and forgiven by God can reach out to love others. Jude longs for a lot of love to be made manifest in the lives of the saints.

A genuine concern for the welfare of others is what motivated Jude to write his own love letter. At first, the holy author wanted to write of the common salvation. Like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jude wanted to write of Calvary. Jude wanted to remember the basics of the Christian faith for the doctrines of salvation are so great. Here is the incarnation, the cruel Cross, and the tender call of the gospel. What was near to the heart of the four evangelists was also near to the heart of Jude.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and *exhort* you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

1:3 Write unto you. As Jude picked up his pen to write, God the Holy Spirit moved him to consider another topic. In particular the Spirit wanted Jude to write a letter of exhortation challenging the saints to contend for the faith once and for all delivered by the other writers of Scripture. In the writings of Peter and Paul, in the recorded words of the four gospels are the doctrinal teachings of Christ. What Jude needed to do was to write a message of exhortation that the things taught by others be preserved and treasured.

1:3 Contend for the faith. Those who receive the gospel message should earnestly contend for the faith. This is done in several ways.

First, the faith is contended for when one's personal testimony is given. Each believer is to be a vital witness before the world by life and by lip.

Second, the faith is contended for when Christ is not denied but declared openly (Matt. 5:14-16).

Third, the faith is contended for when new teachings are rejected because they are contrary to sound doctrine. There is so much false doctrine in the world and in the Church. From legalism to licentiousness, from works of righteousness for salvation, to self-esteem theology to universalism, the seeds of falsehood are present. The Christian who would be faithful to Christ must identify truth from error and then contend for that which has been entrusted to the care of the Church. Jude never did get to write his gospel letter that he first wanted to but what he did write will be of great value for it is part of the Word of God which lives and abides forever.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:4 This is a difficult passage in the sense that it teaches a very disturbing concept. The divine truth is set forth, there are certain individuals ordained to eternal damnation. It is very easy to be upset by this doctrinal teaching because we have always been taught that consequences follow actions. A person first does something and then, if it is wrong, punishment is administered. Now we learn that certain people are ordained to condemnation and we ask, "*How can that be?*" We want to know, "*Is this just? Is this right? Is this fair?*"

As we consider this matter we are immediately reminded that not only are actions punished, but also intentions are brought under judgment as well in both the secular and spiritual world. In the secular world, civil laws have been established to punish the intent to do something wrong as well as the actions of wrongdoing.

Scripturally, the *Bible* presents a similar decision on the part of God. It is His fixed decree that bad behavior will be punished. It is also His determination that there will be certain people who will not be the objects of redeeming grace but shall be left in their natural fallen state to work out the intentions of their own hearts. Knowing their intentions, God judges them aforetime.

1:4 For certain men. The entrance into the professing Church by false teachers is described in four ways.

First, from their nature. "*For certain men*" says the apostles. Had the false teachers been fallen angels, Christian suspicions might have been aroused. Had a beast tried to teach something as the serpent instructed Eve, it would have been unusual. But false teachers are in the form of men and men are trusted especially if they are articulate, handsome, and personable.

Second, the false teachers are identified from their small number. "*For certain men,*" writes Jude. He does not name them and that is wise because the principle stays the same while the false doctrines change. For example, the early Church had to deal with false teachers such as Nicholas, Valentinus, Simon, and Marcion.

Then third, the false teachers are described from their subtlety. "*They crept in unwares.*" The imagery is that of deceit mixed with a certain amount of boldness. Like the soldiers who left the large wooden horse for the citizens of Troy, false teachers sneak into the Church pretending to be lovers of Christ, pretending to be orthodox in the faith, and pretending to have a love for holiness.

Finally, the false teachers are identified from Divine permission. "*They were before ordained to this condemnation.*" If we ask why we find false teachers inside the Church of Christ, the Divine answer is simple. "*God has allowed them entrance because they were ordained to this condemnation.*"

1:4 Ordained to condemnation. The word "*condemnation*" is a strong word. It is characterized in several ways.

First, there is an emptiness of spiritual judgment and understanding. There is an inability to judge between good and bad. In Philippians 1:9-10, Paul prays that the Church might be able to judge righteous judgment for those who are condemned cannot. The Scribes and the Pharisees reflect this point. Responsible for discovering the true Messiah, the Scribes and the Pharisees were right to reject false claimants to this office.

But the problem came when the true Messiah appeared in the Person of Jesus Christ and the religious leaders of Israel were not able to judge between the good and the bad. They were ordained to condemnation.

Second, in the condemned, there is a numbness of spirit. The holy instruments that God uses to awaken sinners to flee to salvation do not stir those who are ordained to condemnation. Like Pharaoh of old, the hearts of the ungodly are hardened so that neither threats of Divine wrath nor appeals of Divine love will move the soul towards the Saviour.

Third, there is the embracing of strong delusions by those who are ordained to condemnation (2 Tim. 3:13). There are people who believe first one false teacher and then another. They are carried away by every wind and doctrine.

Fourth, there is an eternal argument with gospel truth by the condemned. God's people submit to biblical revelation. The rest want to argue and debate. Furthermore, because they do not want to obey the truth (Rom. 2:8), they will resist it to the bitter end (2 Tim. 3:8).

Fifth, those who are ordained to condemnation experience progressiveness in sin. They "*wax worse and worse*" (2 Tim. 3:13). After his death, the disciples remembered that Judas progressed in sin. He stole money from the bag. He criticized good works, and finally, he betrayed the Lord of glory.

Sixth, those who are ordained to condemnation lead others into evil without hesitation. There are those who deceive others as they have been deceived (2 Tim. 3:13). Unspeakable behavior is manifested by those who are ordained to condemnation and who are not the objects of redeeming grace.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

1:5 Remember. Paul's first major argument for a defense of the gospel was based on the fact of the existence of false teachers who dared to turn the grace of God into acts of lasciviousness and then went on to boldly deny God the Father and God the Son.

His second argument is taken from the destruction of the unrighteous. The message becomes crystal clear. Professing Christians need to be careful to avoid false doctrines and false teachers resulting in an immoral lifestyle if they do not want to share a tragic fate. Jude illustrates his argument of the severity of God with three historical examples that would be familiar to the Christian community. By using these particular examples Jude destroys any false security associated with privileges (racial Israel); special emissaries (angels); or social approval (Sodom and Gomorrah).

The First Illustration

Jude 1:5

The first example of divine judgment upon those who are evil is the destruction of many souls of the Israelites in the desert after the Exodus (1:5). Though delivered by divine grace and power the Exodus generation was destroyed for their unbelief and wicked behavior.

- Some were destroyed by fiery serpents (Num. 2:6).
- Some were destroyed by an earthquake (Num. 16:31).
- Some were destroyed for immorality (Num. 25:9).
- Some were destroyed by unauthorized military maneuvers (Num. 14:45).
- Most were destroyed because of their rebellious and unbelieving murmuring against God (Num. 14:29).

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

The Second Illustration

Jude 1:6

The second example of God's severe judgment against false teachers is how He dealt with the angels who defected and revolted against Divine authority.

The *Bible* says the fallen angels left their first estate which may simply mean that they left their original state of creation as to holiness, righteousness, and integrity. Jesus said that the Devil did not abide in the truth (John 8:44). Why the angels left their original righteousness is just as great a mystery as why Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden. But then, the mystery of sin is reflected in our own souls. Why do we speak words we know will hurt? Why do we do things we know will destroy our souls?

Not only did these angels leave their first estate but also their own habitation. The image here is that of a proper station or position. The apostle reveals the angels acted like soldiers who have deserted their post where the Commander in Chief had placed them. These angels disrupted the Divine arrangements of the universe so that whatever their unique duties originally were, they became vacant.

Something awful in the universe happened. An angel became a Devil and his followers became demons to function as liars, slanders, and adversaries of God, murders, and spirits of uncleanness. The very magnitude of this revolt defies all description. Here were the sons of God (Job 1:6) engaging in a heinous impiety by forsaking that office and station wherein God had placed them. Here were the highest of God's creation becoming the lowest of worms. There are a number of observations to make.

First, holiness, the very image of God, makes the difference between an angel and a devil. Second, truth and holiness is older than sin. Sin is an intrusion into the moral universe. It had a beginning and shall have an end (Matt. 19:8) *"from the beginning it was not so."*

Third, sinful angels left their original place because Lucifer first left his. They were not careful of the one they followed.

Fourth, sinful creatures are never happy in the presence of God. The angels left of their own volition as well as due to Divine expulsion. The enmity of sin against God and holiness is not to be reconciled. All workers of iniquity must hear the Lord say, *"Depart from me" (Matthew 7:23).*

Fifth, the sin of the angels becomes a word of warning lest Christians leave a place of spiritual habitation of personal holiness.

When the angels left their first estate and their own dwellings, they left it completely and finally with no hope of return. *"Angels went so far, that they never turn; they fell so low, they never arise" (Matthew Henry).*

This is proved from the present status, of many who are reserved in chains of darkness. The chains are not material instruments of bondage that might be put on a prisoner to keep him from running away, but the chains are just as real.

The *Bible* reveals there are spiritual chains that bind the soul.

First, there are chains of sin called bonds of iniquity, which cannot be broken except by omnipotent power (Acts 8:23; Prov. 5:22). In the case of fallen angels omnipotent power shall not be given (2 John 3:8, present tense).

Second, there are chains of Divine power. The strong man is bound by a Stronger than himself. God says to the angels, *"This far and no further"*. This much activity and no more (Rev. 20).

Third, there are chains of a guilty conscience. James 2:19 speaks of how the demons fear and tremble. At the sight of Jesus the Judge they cringe. So these chains of which Judas speaks are everlasting. They shall never be taken off (Rev. 22:11) and thus we learn several truths.

- Torments cannot reform devils. Hellish horrors cannot change hellish hearts.
- Restraints are different than reformation.

- Satan's chains are limited. The Enemy cannot hurt a saint unless he is able to place one in moral or mental bondage.

Besides being bound with everlasting chains, fallen angels are under darkness, or better, "*in outer darkness.*" The reference is to a state of existence at the greatest distance from the glory of God. Do the fallen angels and workers of evil want nothing to do with God? They shall have that desire fulfilled as they wait for the ultimate Day of Judgment. Proper meditation on the fate of the children of Israel in the desert, and proper meditation on the fate of all fallen angels can serve as a warning to contend for the faith lest their fate be shared.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The Third Illustration

Jude 1:7

The apostle Jude sets forth the third example of God's displeasure of false teachers in the historical narrative of what happened to Sodom and Gomorra. The story unfolds in Genesis 13-14. According to Genesis 13:10 Sodom and Gomorrah was geographically like the Garden of Eden, full of splendor and beauty. Martin Luther goes so far to argue that Sodom and Gomorrha was Paradise itself or the Garden of Eden. The area was once beautiful. Rich in fertile soil, the quality of life around the area was one of bounty. Other cities grew up nearby such as Admah and Zeboim yet Sodom remained the metropolis or chief city. From this we first observe that God often provides the choice habitations and the greatest earthly goods to those who prove to be the greatest of sinners. Such is the nature of divine grace.

Second, God sometimes provides the choices habitations and the greatest of earthly goods as a demonstration of how insignificant these items are.

Things are valuable only because man's spirit makes them valuable. Once the Indians in America wore golden nuggets because they were pretty. It was the Europeans who taught the Indians to value it. Martin Luther said, "*The great Turkish Empire is but as a crust which God throws to the dogs.*"

Third, it is rare to find true religion flourishing in a rich soil. The saints of the ages have recognized this truth and have prayed the prayer of Proverbs 30:8, 9. 8 "*Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*".

The *Bible* says Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them did something very offensive to God. They gave themselves over to fornication – and a lesson of life is observed. There is an influence that some people have over others. Cultures influence other cultures.

Unfortunately, people are prone to follow corrupt examples reflected in the words, *"in like manner."* Matthew Henry said, *"Rusty amour laid near that which is bright inflects it with rustiness, but the bright does not impart its brightness to that which is rusty."*

All sin is an act of the will. We read that these cities *"gave themselves over."* Willingly did they seek out sin. Greatly did they promote it. There was no restraint wanted or respected. Passions ruled as the imaginations provided uncertainties. The variety of sin was manifested for the term fornication is not limited to improper relationships between unmarried people. The word also covers deviant behavior such as adultery, orgies, bestiality, rape, and incest.

The particular sin of sexual immorality that the apostle calls attention to was that of going after *"strange flesh"*. The veiled reference is to the sin of homosexuality which is wedded in judgment to hell. What begins in time will continue in eternity. For 2,000 years the true Church of Christ has been faithful in telling people that there is a real hell for real people that shall last without end of time. The truth of this is reflected in the fact that Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as examples to the lost of this world. If the judgment on these cities were limited only to time, the force of fear would be diminished.

If a soul would not suffer the vengeance of God for sexual sins then let it be careful to have sorrowful sensibleness of the inward corruption of human nature. The mind must guard the imaginations of the heart in the fear of God while not making excuses for sin. The *Bible* states plainly *"whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

Despite the terrors of judgment there is hope for in Genesis the story is told of how Lot was delivered from the days of vengeance. And in 1 Corinthians 5 the story is told of how some Christians were once caught up in the gross sins of the flesh. However, God's people must renounce all lifestyles of sin in order to truthfully contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, [authority] and speak evil of dignities [Majesty].

1:8. The issue of sexual purity has always been a problem for God's people. The natural inclinations are strong. The opportunities for sin are abundant. The temptations are real and yet the commandments are compelling.

I. *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

II. *2 Corinthians 7:11 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.*

III. *Ephesians 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness, or courtesousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.*

Besides being identified by sexual immorality, Jude argues that the false professors of salvation despised dominion. The reference is probably to the normal governmental authority of a nation. People are by birth and by nature opposed to law and order. It is only through much training and teaching that the heart is compelled to see the wisdom bound up in authority.

Those who rule have a tremendous responsibility to be fair and just and impartial in their decisions. It was the ancient Greeks who said only that commonwealth could be safe, where the people obeyed the magistrate, and the magistrates the laws. Plato wrote, *"That city cannot be far from ruin, where the laws are not above the magistrate, but the magistrate above the laws."*

The *Bible* teaches that government is ordained of God and Christians are to offer prayers for *"kings, and for all that are in authority"* (1 Tim. 2:2; Prov. 8:15). Those who defile the laws of society God has marked out for condemnation. Those who hurt the dignitaries ordained by God shall not be forgotten but shall also come under the certain judgment of God.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst [dared] not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

1:9 In verse 9 the apostle illustrates the heinous crime of speaking evil of or blaspheming of dignities. The greatness of this sin is magnified by comparing the way the archangel Michael responded to the devil himself. The issue had to do with the body of Moses. According to Deuteronomy 34:6, the Lord buried Moses in such a way and in such a place that *"none knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."*

Apparently, in the spirit world, the burial was contested by the devil. Here is a fascinating glimpse into a world we are only slightly aware of. We do not want to weave more into the narrative than is warranted yet the illustration is designed to teach and so we learn several things.

First, there is a conflict among the fallen and the elect angels. The conflict is intelligent and is fought with words.

Second, there are limitations to the power of all angels who are subject to the control of Almighty God.

Third, the affairs of men in time affect the activities of angels who are timeless. On the day that Moses died the Devil decided to claim the body on the mountaintop. Perhaps it was his intention to energize the body with his own demonic spirits. The body of Moses might well have re-entered camp demonically controlled to lead the people of Israel into open rebellion against God. Whatever his intentions, they were clear enough to raise an alarm from Michael. But instead of calling out verbal abuse, Michael kept to the issue and rebuked the evil intentions in the name of the Lord.

To make personal application, it can be observed that one reason why Church harmony is so difficult to enforce today is because of the railing accusations and the emotional name calling that goes on within the body of Christ. A pastor or any other Church leader who tries to counsel against sinful actions is easily labeled nosy, arrogant, and unloving.

As Jesus was called a glutton, a winebibber, and illegitimate, so His ministers are abused. God's people must learn afresh to avoid railing accusations against leadership whether in the home, at work, in government or in the Church. God's people might be guilty of these things but the Holy Spirit will bring conviction (Acts 23:1-15).

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

1:10 Jude declares that it is a mark of those who are not God's people to speak evil of those things they know not. Lack of knowledge can be manifested in an intellectual or an experiential way. For example, the doctrine of the trinity is a great mystery. Simply because it is not completely understandable to finite man does not mean it is untrue. There are those who speak evil of many Christian doctrines they cannot comprehend.

Out of spiritual ignorance the doctrines of the deity of Christ, hell, the virgin birth, the immortality of the soul, and salvation by a substitutionary death have been attacked.

Then, experientially, because there has been no genuine conversion and no true sanctification, the Christian way of life is evil spoken of. Unfortunately, the evil which men do is not kept to themselves. Jude declares those who are anti-nomian (lawless) in life and language advocate what they do know – a sensuality that is more like the animals in behavior having no tenderness, no commitments, no restraints, no discrimination. They destroy themselves says Jude. Sin without limits is self-destructive. The only thing to do is to know there is a righteous God who has passed a Divine but just judgment full of eternal sorrow.

11 Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

1:11 In this verse Jude provides three more biblical illustrations of sinful people and practices to avoid with the clear implication that if they are not avoided their fate will be shared.

The way of Cain is considered first. Cain was the first-born son of Adam and Eve. He was much wanted. Some *Bible* scholars believe Eve considered him to be the promised Deliverer. But Cain had his own way he wanted to follow. It was the way of hypocrisy in acts of worship for there was not faith (Heb. 11). It was the way of hatred (1 John 3:12).

Those who are not Christians find themselves in the way of Cain, hypocritical and with murder in the heart.

The error of Balaam is considered second. Balaam's story is told in Numbers 22:23, 24. It is the sad story of a prophet of God. The situation was this. The Exodus generation was from Egypt to Palestine.

A man by the name of Balak, king of Moab was afraid of the number of Israelites before him and so desired to find a way to destroy the invaders. Going to Balaam, Balak offered riches and honor if only Balaam would pronounce a curse upon Israel. Balaam thought about the money and three times tried to curse Israel. Each time the Spirit of God intervened and Balaam blessed Israel instead. For his failure Balak dismissed him. However, Balaam never stopped trying to get the money and eventually he found a way to earn his hire. Balaam persuaded many Israelites to adopt the immoral ceremonies associated with the cults of the heathen tribes. Balaam met a much-deserved death when the Midianites and the Moabites were defeated by Israel (Josh 13:22).

The years passed but the Jewish people and God never forgot there was once a prophet of God who believed he could make money of God's people.

In as far as individuals sell religion for selfish purposes they are in the same error of Balaam.

The gainsaying of Core is the third illustration. Korah was the ringleader of a revolt against Moses while the tribes of Israel traveled in the desert. Korah conspired with Dathan and Abiram to challenge the authority of Moses and Aaron. In a dramatic encounter God sent an earthquake to devour the troublemakers who dared to speak against His anointed.

There are a number of reasons why people speak against others such as jealousy, the need to control, feelings of superiority, feelings of inferiority, a desire for some advantage, learned negative behavior, or simple thoughtlessness.

It is easy to think that if the heart does not feel mean-spirited then the speech is acceptable as if words themselves are neutral. That, of course, is wrong. To say with passion, or to say with cold deliberation in a quite voice, "*I hate you,*" brings the same end results of devastation. This passage of *Scripture* demands heart work. Jude reminds God's people not to rail against anyone including the devil. God's people are not to go in the ways of Cain nor run after the error of Balaam by seeking for religious rewards or recognition nor speak against ordained authority. Rather, God's people are to contend for the faith which produces calmness of spirit, purity of life, sincerity and integrity, sharing of resources and humility before authority. Let the church earnestly pray that it might be found in the sphere of genuine faith.

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

1:12 The apostle Jude relentlessly continues to expose the character of those who would destroy the truths of Christendom. He exposes the character of false teachers and false professors by describing their behavior in seven ways.

- They encourage a lifestyle of sin with an appeal to God's grace (1:4).
- They deny the redemptive power of the gospel and deny the deity of Christ (1:4).
- They defile the flesh with mental and physical acts of fornication (1:8).
- They despise authority (1:8).
- They speak evil of all in authority (1:8).
- They talk about spiritual realities never experienced and or theological truths never understood (1:10).
- They will talk about practices and doctrines which encourage moral corruption. Lying, breaking of vows, pride, immorality, cheating, stealing all becomes acceptable (1:11).

1:12 Spots in your feasts. In order to appreciate what Jude is saying, it is important to remember that in the first century, in the early Church, there was a weekly gathering of the saints for what came to be called a Feast of Charity or better, a Love Feast. During this Love Feast communion was taken. Jude points out that the type of person he has been describing might attend a Christian Love Feast but by so doing they were like a spot meaning, they were like a person who has dropped grease or gravy on their clothing. A false Christian will eventually stand out as something ugly and defiled. Christ would have His people be clean. He would have them to appear without any moral spot or wrinkle but as holy and without a spiritual blemish (Eph. 5:27).

1:12 Clouds without water. Jude continues. He says that when a false Christian attends a Love Feast, that person will feed himself without fear for there is an unholy boldness to sin. Evil left unchecked and unchallenged grows more and more aggressive and fearless. This truth can be observed in the work place, in the home, in world history, and in the Church. Many a congregation has been torn apart and many a life has been needlessly hurt by the boldness of the individual who will “feed” on selfish interests without fear of exposure and judgment.

Jude says that such souls are as “*clouds without water*”. The implication of clouds is that rain should follow. Picture a farmer who searches the sky anxiously. He knows that if he does not get rainwater soon, his crop shall die.

The hours pass and the farmer’s heart takes hope. The clouds have gathered. There is the smell of rain in the air. But a strong gust of wind is felt and before long the clouds have passed without water.

A false Christian is exactly like rain clouds without water. Such a person will come and make an impressive religious display. Much will be offered but nothing will be produced that will cause the spirit to grow, the soul to soar, or the heart to rejoice in God our Saviour.

Rather, the false Christian will leave behind a series of broken promises, shattered hopes, confusion, and death. The theology of the Social Gospel, Self Esteem theology, the Liberation theology of the third world countries, the Health and Wealth gospel and the devastating propositions of the cults are modern examples of impressive thoughts that are without lasting spiritual power.

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

1:14 The Lord cometh. The doctrine of the Second Advent and the divine judgment to follow has historically been a source of terror and comfort to the church. It is a source of comfort to the righteous because believers know there is so much evil in the world. The wicked seem to prosper. People literally get away with murder. More than one nation is rampant with sexually transmitted diseases. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar business annually. The most heroic efforts of social and moral reformation seem but a paper wall to hold back the tidal wave of the filth of the flesh. Poverty, child abuse, divorce, spouse abuse, swindles on a national scale involving untold billions of dollars such as the Savings and Loan scandal of the 1980's and much more leaves the heart in awe at what mankind can do to itself.

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

1:15. To execute judgment. One day Jesus Christ will come again to earth with 10,000 thousands of His angels "*to execute judgment.*" The holy agenda has been established for several reasons.

First, to separate the righteous from the unrighteous. The righteous will be identified and so will the unrighteous. There will be a final great separation to convince "*all that are ungodly*". In time the ungodly are not convinced their deeds are intrinsically wicked. However, there is coming a day, when all will be convicted of sin as a fixed principle. The philosophy that prevails today of moral relativism will be over for the Lord will bring conviction of all ungodly deeds. Not all sin is in the mind. The deeds of the body will be judged. In particular, there will be judgment upon those who physically hurt and abuse others. The Lord will also judge the tongue. Those who have blasphemed, those who have used their intellect to deny the Lord will be judged by Him. Because the Lord is coming again, all Christians should find comfort. All others would be wise to know the terror of the Lord. There are several practical points to observe from this text.

First, the delay of time does not negate the certainty of the second coming of Christ. Enoch lived many centuries before Jude. Much time had passed. Still, Jude believed the ancient prophecy.

Second, the final administration of divine justice by Jesus Christ has always been part of God's eternal decree reflected in part by Enoch's early prediction.

Third, Jude reaffirms the resurrection of Christ. If the Lord is coming with His saints. If the Lord is to confront His enemies and comfort His people He must be alive.

Fourth, the immortality of the soul is also in view here for it is said the Lord will come with ten thousands of His saints.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

1:16 Notice some of the marks of the unregenerate.

These are murmurers. The seriousness of this sin before God is reflected historically by the Exodus generation. After being delivered out of the land of bondage, after seeing the ten plagues placed upon Egypt without pain to the Israelites, after knowing something about the goodness of God in providing food, clothing, water, and security the Exodus generation dare to murmur against the Lord. Finally, God had enough and made a decision. Numbers 14:26-30 records what that divine decision was. The reason why this sin is so serious is that it attacks the very essence of God. The *Bible* teaches that God is love. *The Bible* declares that God is good. *The Bible* says that God is faithful. But the voice of the complainer whines and grumbles and so challenges the very love, goodness, and faithfulness of God. Murmurers are never satisfied. No matter how much grace and resources they receive, something is always wrong and something is always to be made better. Unfortunately, in every congregation there are whiners and murmurers. Jude says something else in his epistle, specifically, there is good evidence that the unregenerate can be identified. God will not tolerate the murmurer. It is a vicious, wicked, damnable sin. The lips of the redeemed will say like Paul who even in prison declared, "*I have learned in whatsoever state I am in to be content.*"

These are... complainers. According to Jude, the reason why such people complain is that they are really walking after their own lusts or intense desires. They want what they want regardless and they will whine before God Himself to get it. The mouth reveals an ungrateful heart, an unsubmitive heart, and an unregenerate heart. Such individuals walk after their own intense desires.

Mouths speaking great swelling words. Psychologists teach that boasting is linked to feelings of insecurity and the need to control and dominate. Spiritually, the *Bible* teaches boasting is characteristic of those who still exist outside the sphere of true saving faith and enjoy revealing an inflated ego. In context, the boasting that Jude refers to is that of having superior spiritual knowledge.

There is more. Jude describes another characteristic of the unregenerate. They are prone to treat individuals with admiring reverence for the sake of the advantage they can get from so doing. There is a genuine respect for individuals. There is also an exploitation of them as well. It is not always easy to discern the difference. Sometimes it is very easy.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts [passions].

19 These be they who separate themselves [cause divisions], sensual, having not the Spirit.

1: 17-19 Jude would have the saints to be aware of evil individuals and for good reason. To trust without caution is to be hurt. It is possible to reject truth because of the deception of professing Christians. The best way to be alert to the evil that still rages in the hearts of those who would destroy the Church of Christ is to remember the words spoken by the apostles of Christ.

Peter, James, John and all the rest were not strangers to the enemies that can come into the Church fellowship. After all, they had Judas for a perfect negative case study. I suspect that after his exposure the disciples of Christ examined the life of Judas thoroughly.

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, analyzed the other Jude who was revealed as a false disciple of Christ and joined with the apostles to declare that "*there should be mockers [scoffers] in the last times, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts [obeying their own ungodly passions]. These be they who separate themselves [or cause divisions]. Sensual, or men of the world. Having not the Spirit.*"

Here, then, are the marks of the damned. Here are the characteristics of the unconverted. The list is long which tells us that sin has many ways to express itself (1:4-25). The signs of false teachers and of all unregenerate people are many.

- They pervert the grace of our God into an excuse for immortality 1:4
- They disown Jesus Christ 1:4
- They pollute the body 1:8
- They speak evil of authority 1:8
- They are argumentative 1:10
- They, like Cain, are hypocritical 1:11
- They, like Balaam, are greedy for money 1:11
- They, like Korah, defy authority 1:11

- They identify themselves with the Church even to the point of taking communion 1:12
- They have no fear of God or man 1:12
- They are totally self centered 1:12
- They have no strength of character and no self discipline but are like clouds driven by the wind 1:12
- They are insensitive to inner conviction 1:14
- They speak harsh things against Christ 1:15
- They murmur 1:16
- They are boastful 1:16
- They try to make merchandise of the saints 1:16

This is a frightful list and in the Day of Judgment, God will look to see whose heart is characterized with these moral atrocities. The book of Jude has been written to inform the Church of the characteristics of the unconverted and to challenge God's people to earnestly contend for the faith. Faith is thus viewed not only as a doctrinal set of beliefs but as a changed lifestyle as well.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

1:20 **Beloved.** The word "*beloved*" reveals several truths. The word teaches that within the Church fellowship there should be a special feeling for other Christians. Over and over again the *New Testament* speaks of the distinguishing mark of the Church as having genuine affection, thoughtfulness, and consideration for others. This affection is not only demonstrated but verbalized for there is nothing wrong with telling each other in the family how much we appreciate what others do and say.

It is interesting to note the word "*beloved*" is in the past tense which is significant. The saints are beloved of God. Wherever you read about God's love for His own in the *Bible*, it is in the past tense with one exception and that is Revelation 1:5 in the original (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 8:37; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 John 4:10, 11, 19).

Before the world began, before man was created, before the fall, before birth, individuals have been loved by God. God's love is selective (Mal. 1:2-3). God's love is discriminating and exclusive (Rom. 8:29). God's love is everlasting (Jer. 31:3).

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of [on] some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted [made unclean] by the flesh.

1:21-23. The matters of which Jude writes are revealed, not so the Christian can become proud or boastful, nor so that souls can use the love of God as a license to sin. Rather, the Scriptures teach about the love of God in order to encourage faithful living for love does not seek to hurt. Believers have a responsibility to respond in a positive way to the love of God by doing many things which are listed.

First, Christians are to build themselves up in the sphere of their holy faith. Faith that is holy is faith that is placed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The temptation is to place ultimate confidence in health, materialism, a good job, political leaders, military weapons, friends, or a savings account. All of these blessings are gifts of divine grace but they do not in of themselves produce holiness. And, ironically, all of these blessings have been used by false teachers to undermine confidence in God. Faith is not built upon things which are carnal but things which are spiritual such as personal bible study, prayer (James 1:5), meditation, suffering and the counsel of others.

Second, Christians are to pray in the Holy Ghost. The reference is not to praying in tongues but it is to pray with utter dependence and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Third, Christians are to keep themselves in the love of God. The idea of "*to keep*" is "*to guard*." Our love for God must be guarded. Love dies as relationships between spouses or between friends or family members demonstrate so well. We guard our love for God by guarding our attitude and actions and by being careful of our thoughts. It is far too easy to turn on God.

Fourth, Christians are to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Here is a wonderful passage for all Christians who wrestle with assurance of salvation. God will be gracious. He loves to show mercy to those who love Him and who love His Son.

Fifth, Christians are to have compassion. It does make a difference. One thing that will help to have compassion is to understand why people do what they do. Another thing that will help is to fully comprehend the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the great grace of God. Still another aide is not to press for details that will only hurt and not help. Perhaps those whom Jude wanted to have compassion on were those who followed the false teachers. By having compassion, a difference was realized in that souls came back to the Saviour.

Finally, Christians are to be zealous over some in order to pull them out of the fire as it were. There are critical points in life when a decision one-way or the other will have eternal repercussions. Believers need to be sensitive to such moments in individuals that God makes them aware of so that help can be offered.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

1:24-25 Jude closes his epistle with a doxology of what Jesus Christ can do (1:24-25). Christ can keep His own from falling, and He will. Jesus can present His own without guilt, stain or blemish before the Father, and He will. Jesus will do this because He is the only wise God, and the Savior to whom belongs all glory and majesty, dominion and power. Amen.

Student's Study Guide

Jude 1

Review

1. Why did Jude write this epistle?

Answer

2. In what three ways can the believer contend for the faith?

Answer

3. List seventeen marks of the unconverted.

Answer

The unconverted may be identified.

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4. List five responsibilities committed to the Christian.

Answer

Christians are to be committed to the following activity.

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-

5. How can God justly condemn someone on the basis of foreordination?

Answer

Reflection

1. Does it surprise you to read some people are ordained to condemnation? What are your thoughts on this biblical truth? Be specific.
2. Can Christians criticize officials without sinning?
3. Why is it unethical to engage in flattering individuals for personal gain?
4. How can individuals keep themselves in the love of God?
5. Do you think the devil would like to have your body?

Personal Application

1. Do you love and embrace in a positive manner biblical words and concepts including the following: grace, mercy, peace, calling, sanctification, foreordination, condemnation? If there is a biblical word or concept your heart reacts against what should be done to bring the heart into harmony with the revealed character and will of God according to gospel terms? Be specific.
2. Take a blank sheet of paper and write Characteristics of the Unconverted. Write down the seventeen identifying marks. By each one write, “*Still applies*” or “*No longer applies*” by way of self-analysis. How many characteristics still apply, if the truth were told? Write the total number at the bottom of the column. Now by each characteristic you are convicted of write what you will do about the matter.

3. Check “Yes” or “No” after each of the following statements.

- Through a regular study of the *Word of God* I try to build myself up in the sphere of the Holy Faith. Yes ___ No ___

- I pray often and regularly and with a conscious dependence upon the Holy Ghost.

Yes ___ No ___

- I am a loving Christian person, which others will testify to. Yes ___ No ___

- I have a real confidence in the person and work of Jesus Christ so that I am not afraid to die. I believe in the mercy of Jesus Christ to forgive me of my sins and give me life eternal. Yes ___ No ___

- I am a compassionate person. On this point others will agree. Yes ___ No ___

4. Have you ever had a spiritual experience whereby you started to do one thing and wound up doing something far different for the glory of God and the good of others? If so please share that experience.

5. Do you believe in the eternal perseverance of the saints or the preservation of the same by God? Explain why or why not. Appeal to Scripture to support your answer.

Memory Work

Jude 1: 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Supplemental Material

Note on Jude 1:4

At least two important preliminary points must be made when studying the Scriptures, especially those passages which contain difficult concepts such as predestination, election, foreordination and condemnation. First, the Bible is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). The *Bible* says "All Scripture is God-breathed." There is no other option. And on this point the Christian must never waver. Unfortunately, some do. "*There is a present day view,*" writes Henry Halley, "*held rather widely in certain intellectual circles, that the Bible is a sort of age-long story of man's effort to find God: a record of man's experiences reaching after God, gradually improving his idea of God by building on the experiences of preceding generations. In those passages, so abundant in the Bible, in which it is said that God spoke, God, according to this view, did not really speak; but men put their ideas in language professing to be the language of God, while in reality it was only what men imagined about God. The Bible is thus reduced to the level of other books, and is made to appear, not a Divine book, but a human book, pretending to be Divine. We reject this view utterly and with abhorrence. We believe the Bible to be, not man's account of his effort to find God, but rather an account of God's effort to reveal Himself to man: God's own record of His dealings with men, in His unfolding revelation of Himself to the human race: the Revealed Will of the Creator of Man, given to Man by the Creator Himself, for Instruction and Guidance in the Ways of Life.... The Bible is GOD'S WORD in a sense that No Other Book in the World is God's Word.*"

Second, what the Bible plainly teaches must be honored despite our own personal preferences or prejudices.

Note on Jude 1:4

Foreordained. God does no wrong when He judges the intent of a person's heart as well as the actions. In 1975 a woman by the name of Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme tried to assassinate President Gerald R. Ford. She did not succeed in the attempt to shoot the President but she tried to do something terrible. Terrorist who make plans to set off a bomb can be arrested and tried for their evil intent. It is not wrong for civil judges to convict individuals on their intention to do wrong. Nor is it wrong for God to do the same.

Note on Jude 1:4

Certain men. In more recent years, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has had to contend with certain individuals such as Charles Taze Russell, Joseph Rutherford, Joseph Smith, not to mention Ellen G. White, or Mary Eddy. False doctrine is always introduced into the Church by the few and yet, though few in number, false teachers are able to destroy large portions of the truth by degrees. Like a single cancer cell that will multiply, false teaching will bring spiritual death by degrees.

Note on Jude 1:5

From the destruction of the Exodus generation comes a number of observations.

First, the privileges of a people do not exempt them from discipline.

Second, the number of people who do wrong is no protection from the wrath of God. Many nations of the earth may rise up against the Lord but He only laughs.

Third, miracles do not reform an unholy heart.

Fourth, the greater the goodness of God is abused the greater will be the severity of judgment.

Fifth, sin will destroy the most hopeful expectations of mercy.

Sixth, even in judgment God remembers mercy. A new generation will go into the land.

Note Jude 1:6

The angels. The *Bible* has much to say about angels as the messengers of God. Basically, angels are spirits. This is true of both good and bad angels. "*He maketh His angels spirits*" Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 1:7 "*a lying spirit [was put] in the mouth of all his prophets*" 1 Kings 22:21, 22.

Since spirits are angels they cannot be bound with human chains but only with the authority of the Word of God. Matthew 8:16 teaches that Jesus "*cast out the spirits with His word.*" He needed to do this because when the fallen angels enter into bodies, they intend to harm the person in some way (Luke 8:30).

In their spiritual natures, angels are immortal, immaterial, and fixed as to their eternal destiny as elect or fallen angels. They are also distinct entities. Angels are distinct as to their essence from God, man, animals, or plants. This is manifested in several ways.

First, from their actions. The elect angel praise God, they worship the Son, they run errands, speak, wrestle with men, and gather the elect of the nations. In contrast, the non elect angels oppose the works of God.

Second, from their endowments. The angels have life, power, wisdom, understanding, strength and knowledge.

Third, from their emotions. Some are happy. Others are miserable. Some behold the face of God while others are punished in everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41). The elect angels have a special ministry to the elect of God.

First, angels watch over the affairs of the saints (Deut. 4:17).

- Angels defend the saints (Rev. 12:7). Michael and his angels fought in defense of the Church. Note 2 Kings 6:16 where the prophet Elisha told a fearful servant of the many angels.

- Angels comforting the saints. Jacob was so encouraged (Gen. 32:1,2) as was Mary (Luke 1:30) and Paul (Acts 27:24).
- Angels encourage holiness. Galatians 1:8 declares the Law was revealed by angels. In Acts 1:11 angels instructed the disciples. Peter was sent for by an angel who appeared at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:3-6).

As the elect angels are in the service of the thrice-Holy God, the fallen angels are in the service of Satan.

- The fallen angels tempt man Job 1; Luke 22:31.
- The fallen angels buffet the saints (2 Cor. 12:7).
- The fallen angels stir up opposition (Rev. 2:10).
- The fallen angels cause the damnation of souls such as in the case of Judas.

Note Jude 1:6

If the question arises, "*Why can the angles not be saved or redeemed?*" The honest answer is that no one really knows. Apparently, God has made a decision never to assist the fallen angels for relief and recovery. Certainly, He is under no obligation. What is revealed is that God has a spiritual prison for rebellious spiritual creatures that is characterized by chains and darkness.

Note Jude 1:7

Homosexuality. Several truths can be said about this particular sin for it was widespread in Sodom and Gomorrah and openly advocated. There was an unholy boldness in this practice without any regard of God's eye or observation (Gen. 13:13). There was obstinacy and persistency in the sin of homosexuality even after the initial judgment of blindness had been passed. It was said that the men "*wearied themselves to find the door*" (Gen. 19:11) in order to molest the angels.

The sin of homosexuality invited the harshest judgment of Almighty God. The way that God dwelt with Sodom and Gomorrah is told. There was a threefold fire. There was the fire of lust (1 Cor. 7:9; Rom. 1:27). There was the fire of heaven (Gen. 19:24). There was not a fire of nature as we are familiar with nature but an act of God directly. The fire was abundant, sudden, tormenting, and destructive. Today, Sodom and Gomorrah lies submerged at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

Note Jude 1:14-15

While the church awaits the ultimate rendering of a righteous judgment at the second advent of Christ, it must continue to fulfill its responsibility in time by holding individuals accountable for their attitude and actions. Down through the ages the church has tried to execute a righteous judgment on disruptive personalities. Three basic approaches have been adopted.

First, total toleration so that anything goes.

Second, total regimentation in which there is a constant watch, which soon produces fear, suspicion, self-righteousness, and isolation.

Third, moderation with limited attempts at church discipline. Exerting church discipline is usually too little and too late.

None of these methods have proven to be very successful. Jesus warned that there would always be a mixture of the true with the false, the sacred with the profane. He too had a Judas.

The best that can be hoped for is that those who hurt others spiritually will make themselves known so that the godly can identify them and beware. It is also hoped that a patient waiting knowing that there will be a day of eternal accountability.